

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST THEFT

Many visitors to London have their pockets picked, purses snatched, or valuables stolen by pickpockets and other petty thieves who frequent rail and underground stations, major shopping streets, restaurants, department stores and other crowded areas. During the past year, approximately 3,000 Americans have come to the Embassy to obtain replacement of lost or stolen passports. You can reduce the possibility of this happening to you by taking the following precautions.

- Do not leave luggage or handbags unattended anytime, anywhere, particularly in rail and tube stations, hotel lobbies and airport terminals.
- Do not carry with you more money than you are likely to need when shopping or sightseeing. Leave valuable items, such as passports, airline tickets, jewelry, credit cards and cash not immediately needed, in the safe of your hotel.
- Items of sentimental value, such as family photographs, and difficult to replace items, such as driver's licenses, social security cards and address books, should also be left at one's hotel, although not necessarily in a safe.
- It is best to leave your passport in the hotel safe. It need not be carried unless you are going to cash travelers checks. Then it should be kept separately from one's wallet or handbag. This may not be feasible for women, but men, whose passports are sometimes lost when a wife's handbag is snatched, should carry their passports in a front trouser or jacket pocket. Thieves are seldom interested in passports alone.
- Purses or handbags should be kept securely fastened and shoulder bags should be held against the body. Wallets should be carried in a front trouser pocket. Consider using a money belt.
- Women's handbags are particularly at risk in crowded restaurants when placed on the floor next to the chair or under the table, or when hung over the back of a chair. Thieves are quite adept at removing these bags if you do not actually have hold of them or if you have left them while visiting the buffet or salad bar.
- Don't leave purses and handbags, or men's jackets containing wallets, unguarded while making purchases or trying on clothing in stores. A moment's carelessness is all that a thief requires.
- Do not leave baggage or other valuable items in an unguarded car at any time, and certainly never at night. A locked car trunk can easily be broken into and often is.

General Advice For All Travelers

- Safeguard your money by buying travelers checks. Do not cash them all at once - that defeats the object of purchasing them at all. Only cash as much as you need for the foreseeable future, and keep a record of the check numbers you have used.
- Most travelers check companies ask to see the purchase receipt if you file a refund claim. Keep it separately, NOT in the same wallet, handbag or purse as the travelers checks themselves.
- Whenever possible, leave valuable items such as jewelry, travelers checks, credit cards, airline tickets and cash not immediately required in the hotel safe. Remember to obtain a receipt for the property you have deposited. You will find Safe Deposit centers listed in Yellow Pages.
- Leave a list of your passport, credit card and travelers check numbers with a friend or relative whom you can contact easily in an emergency.
- Take out travel insurance to cover the expense incurred by loss or theft of your belongings overseas. Carry details of the policy with you and leave a copy with a friend or relative.
- Do not leave baggage in an unguarded car at any time.